



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (049)

TEXT: *La tierra natal*

AUTHOR: Juana Manuela Gorriti

EDITOR: Stockcero Edition

PART 1: CONTEXT & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. A JOURNEY INTO MEMORY AND IDENTITY:

La tierra natal is a profound and poignant travelogue by Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818-1892), recounting her emotional return to Salta, Argentina, in 1886 after fifty-five years of forced exile. More than a physical journey, it's an introspective voyage into the intricate landscape of personal and national memory.

Gorriti, a pioneering figure in Latin American women's literature, explores the superimposition of past and present, contrasting her idealized recollections with the altered reality of her hometown. This creates a complex narrative about the enduring power of memory and the elusive nature of "home."

2. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND THE ALLEGORICAL:

While a deeply personal account, Gorriti's journey becomes an allegory for Argentina's own history—a nation shaped by civil wars, exiles, and the constant negotiation between its rural traditions and the forces of modernity. The text touches on themes of exile, return, and the search for meaning in a world irrevocably changed.

The preface by S. Estrada (1888) and Gorriti's own response highlight her historical significance and the profound impact of her prolonged absence on her connection to her homeland, underscoring her role as a living legend returning to her roots.

3. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF 19TH-CENTURY ARGENTINA:

The narrative implicitly reflects the turbulent 19th-century Argentine landscape, marked by political strife (Unitarios vs. Federales), civil wars, and the shaping of national identity. Gorriti, as a witness and participant in these historical events, weaves these elements into her personal story.

The demographic details (Salta as a small, religious, rural city) provide crucial context for understanding the environment Gorriti returns to, emphasizing the contrast with the bustling, Europeanized Buenos Aires she had also experienced.

4. GENDERED PERSPECTIVES ON RETURN:

Gorriti's "journey into memory" is particularly poignant from a female perspective. As a woman who achieved literary and social prominence despite the constraints of her era, her reflections on her "patria" are imbued with a unique sensibility, balancing personal longing with a broader understanding of national history.

The descriptions of social interactions, from her encounters with old friends and family to her observations of Salta's citizens, offer insights into the roles of women and the social customs of the time.

5. LITERARY STRUCTURE AS TRAVELOGUE AND MEMOIR:



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The book adopts the structure of a travelogue, where the journey itself serves as the narrative spine. However, this is enriched by the constant interpolation of memories, historical anecdotes, and personal reflections, creating a multi-layered text.

Gorriti's skill as a storyteller transforms her personal experience into a compelling exploration of universal themes of belonging, change, and the passage of time.

PART 2: TOPICS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Exile and Return: How does Gorriti portray the experience of returning to one's homeland after a long exile? What are the emotional and psychological complexities involved, as depicted in *La tierra natal*?

Memory vs. Reality: Discuss how Gorriti's memories of Salta differ from the reality she encounters upon her return. What does this contrast reveal about the nature of memory and its role in shaping identity?

National Identity in the 19th Century: How does Gorriti's personal journey reflect broader themes of national identity and historical change in 19th-century Argentina? Consider the references to civil wars and political figures.

The Female Traveler/Narrator: As a prominent female writer of her time, how does Gorriti's perspective as a woman influence her observations and interpretations of the places and people she encounters?

Literary Structure: Analyze the use of the travelogue format blended with memoir and historical reflection. How does this "interpolation of memories" (as described in the backcover) contribute to the narrative's depth and meaning?

"La tierra natal" in the "Summer Reading" Bundle: How does this short work, focusing on a specific historical and personal journey, align with the "short and accessible" theme of the bundle? What makes it an engaging read for students?

PART 3: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **Gorriti, Juana Manuela.** *La tierra natal*. Ed. Stockcero Edition. Stockcero, [Year of publication].
- **Gorriti, Juana Manuela.** *Sueños y realidades*. Buenos Aires: Imprenta de "La Nación," 1865. (For broader context of her work).
- **S. Estrada.** Preface to *La tierra natal*. (Contemporary perspective on Gorriti's life and work).
- **Shumway, Nicolas.** *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. (For socio-historical context).
- **Berg, Mary G.** "Juana Manuela Gorriti." *Latin American Women Writers: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. María Herrera-Sobek. New York: Routledge, 2003. (For biographical and critical context).



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PART 4: QUIZ BANK (Multiple Choice)

*What is the primary theme of Juana Manuela Gorriti's **La tierra natal**?*

- A) A political treatise advocating for federalism.
- B) A nostalgic return to her hometown of Salta after a long exile.
- C) A fictional account of the Argentine War of Independence.
- D) A scientific exploration of Argentina's geography.

Correct Answer: B

According to the backcover, what is Gorriti's unique approach to documenting her return to Salta?

- A) She focuses solely on architectural changes in the city.
- B) She interpolates memories and historical reflections, comparing them with the present reality.
- C) She avoids personal sentiments, maintaining an objective historical account.
- D) She primarily interviews current residents to gather their perspectives.

Correct Answer: B

The text suggests that Gorriti's perceived "furtive incursion dressed as a man" in her story "Gubi Amaya" is:

- A) A fictional element with no biographical basis.
- B) A symbolic representation of female empowerment in the 19th century.
- C) Considered by some opinions as partially autobiographical, reflecting her yearning for her homeland.
- D) A critique of gender roles in traditional Argentine society.

Correct Answer: C

*Despite returning to Salta, the overall tone of **La tierra natal** is described as:*

- A) Exuberantly joyful and optimistic about the future.
- B) Purely factual and emotionally detached.
- C) A blend of personal memories and historical context, motivated by a search for understanding rather than mere nostalgia.
- D) Heavily critical of the residents for not preserving the past.

Correct Answer: C

The reference to the 1895 census data for Salta (118,015 inhabitants in the province, 20,361 in the capital) serves to highlight:

- A) The rapid industrialization and growth of Argentine cities at the time.
- B) The importance of urban centers over rural areas.
- C) That Salta remained a small, deeply religious, and rural-influenced city even at the end of the 19th century.
- D) Gorriti's focus on statistical analysis in her literary work.

Correct Answer: C



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